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14 March 1962

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Copy No. 564

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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Approved For Release 2003/03/10 : CIA-RDP79T00975A006200460001-2

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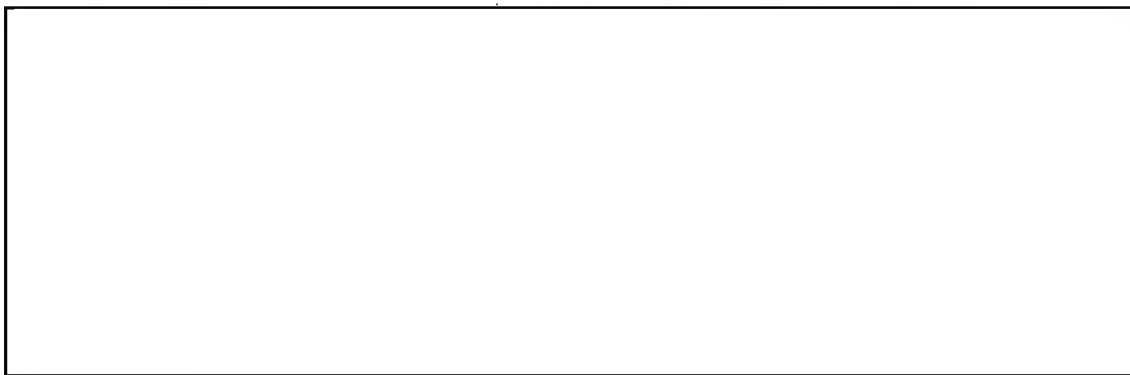


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6. Guatemala City: Police quell student rioting in capital. (*Page tit*)

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Guatemala: Student rioting erupted in Guatemala City on 13 March, and police attempts to quell the disturbances apparently resulted in a number of injuries. Communist-led student agitation in the capital has led to frequent demonstrations since last week in defiance of the modified martial law which has been in force since late January. The death of any students as a result of police action might generate popular support for the opposition which has heretofore been lacking.

The Ydigoras regime is faced with threats from several sources, any one of which could lead to its overthrow. The

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DAILY BRIEF

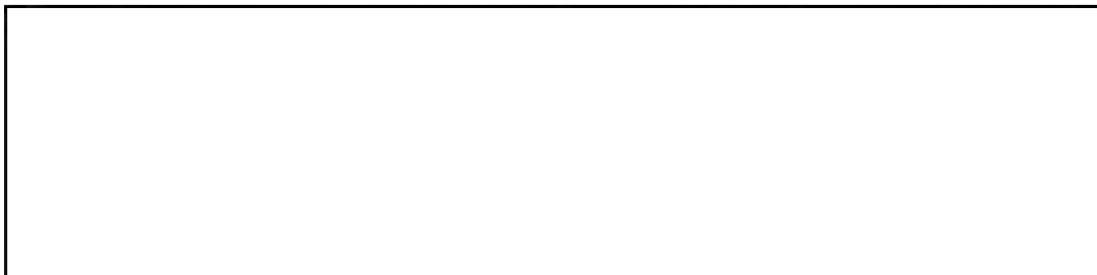
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guerrilla bands which attacked isolated military posts in the eastern part of the country early last month have not been completely eliminated, and the Communists are trying to promote further guerrilla operations through various opposition groups over which they have some influence. The Cuban Government has reportedly granted financial support for such action.

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Guatemalan Government Faces Potential Threats
From Several Sources

The antigovernment demonstrations which student groups have been carrying on almost daily for about a week were originally launched by non-Communist opposition parties protesting what they claim were fraudulent congressional elections last December. Congress opened on 1 March, and in less than a week Communist agitators had seized the leadership of the protest movement. On 9 March the demonstration before the legislative building prevented congress from convening that day.

The Communists' Guatemalan Labor party, with only about 1,100 members in a total population of nearly 4,000,000, recognizes its inability by itself to engage in meaningful political activity. Its leaders, however, have proven to be particularly adept at influencing non-Communist political groups to act against the regime. Several months ago the party reversed a policy of not encouraging the ouster of the Ydigoras regime for fear it would be replaced by a more strongly anti-Communist regime; now the party is actively encouraging revolutionary activity by any group it feels it can influence.

The announced presidential candidacy of the popular ex-President Arevalo in the elections scheduled for December 1963 is another factor behind the growing rightist restiveness. Arevalo is anathema in rightist and some military circles because of the socio-economic reforms instituted during his 1945-51 presidential term and because his toleration of Communists paved the way for the Communist-dominated Arbenz regime that succeeded him. Arevalo's recent expressions of anti-Communist and anti-Castro views have not weakened the resolve of his enemies to prevent his assumption of the presidency, which is generally considered certain if free elections are held.

Honduras

The Standard Fruit Company and the union broke off negotiations on 28 February, delaying settlement of the long-standing contract dispute which had been shelved last March only as a result of government intervention. The union is reportedly demanding a contract similar to the one which the Tela Railroad Company (United Fruit) recently signed with its union, the terms of which financially hard-pressed Standard cannot possibly match. The Villeda government, anxious to prevent a banana workers' strike like the one which crippled Honduras in 1954, has initiated the mediation and conciliation called for under the 1959 Labor Code.

At a recent party meeting a Honduran Communist leader spoke of the party's problems and suggested means of overcoming the lack of popular support: "The apathy of the people is a phenomenon related to the liberties they have obtained from the Honduran Government.... Without persecution there is no possibility of a clandestine organization.... Party members (should) agitate and provoke the Honduran Government to take away these privileges and thus create an atmosphere for clandestine struggle."

Ambassador Burrows believes that the Communists hope to use the general strike to create chaos, and that they seek to gain the support of squatters who recently seized United Fruit Company land.

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